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Rudy Wendelin's Smokey Bear paintings travel to Capitan
Smokey Bear Historical Park hosts exhibit April 30 - May 10

Capitan, NM – In honor of Smokey Bear's 80th birthday, the Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan will be hosting a two-week exhibit of paintings by Rudy Wendelin, April 30-May 10.

Rudy Wendelin began working for the Forest Service in 1933 as a draftsman and illustrator. After a stint as a Navy artist during World War II, Wendelin returned to the Forest Service and was given responsibility for the Smokey Bear project. He created hundreds of Smokey representations that highlighted natural resources conservation and forest fire prevention.

Under Wendelin's direction, Smokey assumed the human-like characteristics for which he is best known – wearing a solemn expression, dressed in a forest ranger's hat and jeans, and carrying a shovel.

As Smokey became the immensely popular symbol of the Forest Service's wildfire prevention campaign, Wendelin was recognized for his important contributions. His many awards included the Medal of Honor presented by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Horace Hart Award from the graphic arts industry, and both Silver and Gold Smokey Bear Awards from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He died on August 31, 2000, at the age of 90.

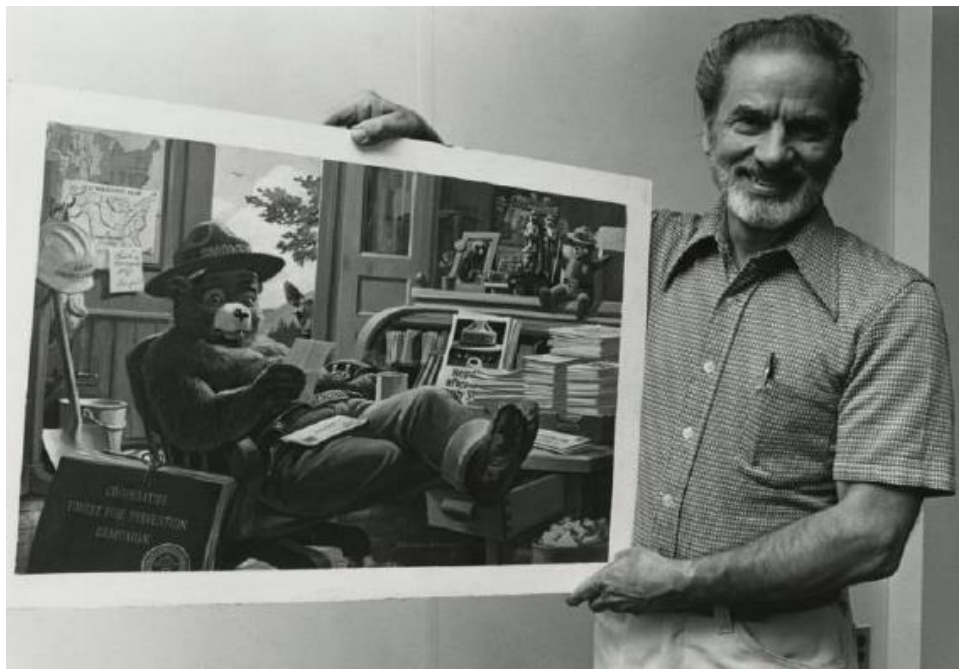
Thanks to Wendelin's art, Smokey's message, "Only YOU can prevent wildfires" has prevailed through generations. On loan from the USDA National Agricultural Library, this traveling exhibition of 19 replica paintings were completed by Wendelin from 1977-1995 and remain the most famous depictions of Smokey Bear.

Smokey Bear Historical Park admission is \$2.00 for adults, \$1.00 for kids ages 7-12, and children 6 & under are free. Park hours are 9:00am - 4:30pm, Tuesday – Sunday (last entry 4:15pm).

For more information about the park, [click here](#).



“Smokey Says – Prevent Wildfires,” 1993, Rudy Wendelin, 22”x28”



Wendelin, holding one of his works. Photo by: USDA National Agricultural Library

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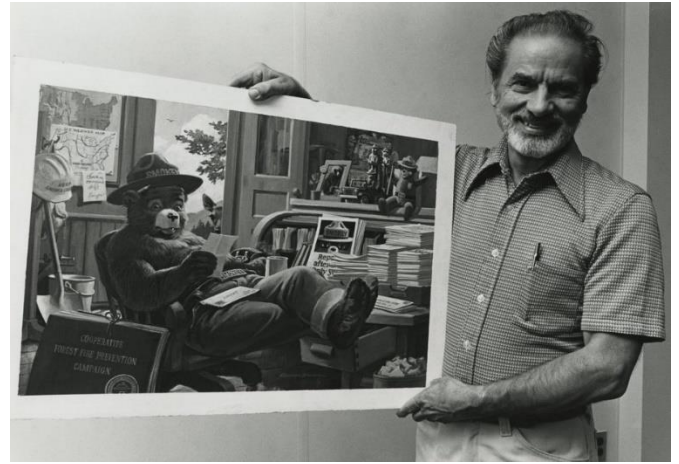
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RUDY WENDELIN COLLECTION



Replicas of Smokey Bear Paintings, 1977-1995
from the USDA Forest Service
and the National Agricultural Library

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Rudolph “Rudy” Andreas Michael Wendelin was born on February 27, 1910, in Herndon, Kansas, and grew up in the nearby town of Ludell. He studied at the University of Kansas School of Architecture and at art schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Washington, D.C. He began his career with the U.S. Forest Service in 1933 as a draftsman and illustrator in Milwaukee. He transferred to the Washington, D.C., office in 1937. After a stint as a Navy artist during World War II, Wendelin returned to the Forest Service and was given responsibility for the Smokey Bear project. He created hundreds of Smokey representations that highlighted natural resources conservation and forest fire prevention.

Under Wendelin’s direction, Smokey assumed the human-like characteristics by which he is best known – wearing a solemn expression, dressed in a forest ranger’s hat and jeans, and carrying a shovel. As Smokey became the immensely popular symbol of the Forest Service’s wildfire prevention campaign, Wendelin was recognized for his important contributions. His many awards included the Medal of Honor presented by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Horace Hart Award from the graphic arts industry, and both Silver and Gold Smokey Bear Awards from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Wendelin is also known as a landscape painter, a sculptor, a political cartoonist, and the artist behind the Forest Service’s 1948 watershed protection film, *The Adventures of Junior Raindrop*. The Woodsy Owl anti-pollution campaign also owes a debt of gratitude to Wendelin. He designed or co-designed six commemorative U.S. postage stamps, including the 1958 Forest Conservation stamp, the 1964 John Muir stamp, the 1969 John Wesley Powell stamp, and the 1984 stamp featuring Smokey Bear.

Wendelin continued his association with Smokey Bear after retiring from the Forest Service in 1973, producing numerous calendar and book illustrations.

He died on August 31, 2000, at the age of 90.

RUDY WENDELIN COLLECTION

Replicas of Smokey Bear Paintings, 1977-1995

Smokey's Fan Mail



Original painting is oil on prepared masonite, 1977, published 1979. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower center. Shows Smokey with feet on desk, reading fan mail at center. Props on top of desk include silver and gold Smokey awards, Smokey figure in jeep, stuffed Smokey doll. U.S. weather map on wall behind Smokey's head. Deer peering in front open window. Image height 16 7/8 inches, width 27 7/8 inches.

Ten-Four, Green and Clear



Original painting is acrylic on Fredrix canvas panel, 1978, published 1980. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey and two cubs in yellow jeep driving away from camping area. Beach and swimmers in a lake in background. Inscribed on a sign at lower right side, "Welcome Campers – Be Careful with Fire". Image height 24 inches, width 30 inches.

OK – Along the Trail



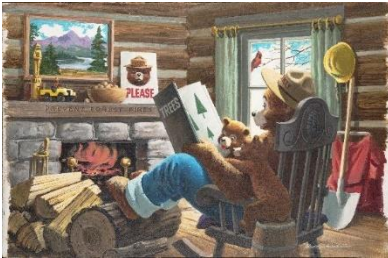
Original painting is acrylic on Fredrix canvas panel, 1979, published 1981. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Smokey and two cubs wearing backpacks. Smokey gives "OK" hand signal to campers at a cabin beside a lake. Smoke curls up from a campfire. Majestic mountains in background. Image height 24 inches, width 30 inches.

Careless People Are the Problem



Original painting is oil on Plyex-canvas foundation board, 1980, published 1982. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey with a drawing on wooden easel. Smokey teaches a group of animals with the message "People + Matches = Fire". Animals include deer, quail, chipmunk, rabbits, turtles, raccoon, squirrel, cardinal, bluebirds, and bear cubs. Burned tree stumps in background. Image height 24 inches, width 30 inches.

Trees Give Us Many Things



Original painting is oil on prepared masonite, 1981, published 1983. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey and two cubs seated in front of roaring fire reading book about trees. Set in log cabin interior. "Prevent Forest Fires" inscribed on mantle. Gold Smokey award and Smokey figure in a jeep on top of mantle. Scenic view painting hanging over fireplace. Image height 19 inches, width 29 inches.

Hurry Up – Here They Come



Original painting is oil with acrylic base on Fredrix canvas panel, 1982, published 1984. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey nailing a "Prevent Forest Fires" poster to a tree. Cubs paint a sign that says, "Have Fun but Be Careful". Bears watch campers headed toward them. Image height 22 inches, width 28 inches.

Dream of a Well-Remembered Forest Fire



Original painting is acrylic on Fredrix canvas panel, 1983, published 1985. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right, dated on back. Smokey sleeps against a burned tree trunk in a new-growth forest. He dreams about his rescue from a forest fire as a cub. Numerous animals and birds surround him. Image height 22 inches, width 28 inches.

Clean and Sparkling Water



Original painting is acrylic and watercolor on Strathmore watercolor board, 1984, published 1986. Signed “Rudolph Wendelin” in lower right. Shows Smokey in center with two cubs playing in a rushing stream. Squirrel and kingfisher looking on. Lake scene in background with sailboats, houses, and mountains. Transparent watercolor in sky and lake scene. Image height 20 inches, width 30 inches.

Protect Nature’s Beauty for Future Generations



Original painting is alkyd oil on Fredrix canvas panel, 1985, published 1987 as “Protect Our Resources”. Signed “Rudolph Wendelin” in lower right. Shows Smokey in left foreground facing the viewer, pointing to a scenic view in background. Lake, mountains, and waterfall in the distance. Two cubs at right peer at a group of people looking at view. Image height 22 inches, width 28 inches.

Nature’s Gold Medal Winner



Original painting is oil on prepared masonite, 1986, published 1988. Signed “Rudolph Wendelin” in lower center. Shows Smokey on right standing against a tree holding a shovel, with a gold medal on a ribbon around his neck, posing for picture. Artist’s hands are shown on left sketching Smokey’s portrait. Animals at Smokey’s feet, scenic view in background. Image height 19 5/8 inches, width 27 inches.

Dear Smokey, Thank You for Protecting Our Recreational Treasures



Original painting is oil on prepared masonite, 1987, published 1989. Signed “Rudolph Wendelin” in lower left. Shows Smokey at his mailbox reading a letter. One cub playing on the mailbox post, pulling down flag. Other cub pulling more letters out of mailbox. Mail truck driving down road in middle ground. Scenic view in background of lake with water skier and sailboats, ranger hut, and mountains. Image height 21 inches, width 28 inches.

Why?



Original painting is oil on prepared masonite, 1988, published 1990. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey holding one cub with second cub holding Smokey's leg, a deer standing behind him. Figures shown in center of totally burned-out area with house ruins and blackened forest. Dramatic orange sky. Sign in foreground reads "Prevent Forest and Brush Fires". Image height 24 inches, width 36 inches.

The Evidence



Original painting is oil on Fredrix canvas panel, 1989, published 1991. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey with two cubs kneeling at burned-out campfire with remains of cigarettes. Burned-out forest in background on right, green forest with animals on left. Image height 24 inches, width 36 inches.

Only You...Can Help Keep the Dream Alive



Original painting is alkyd oil paint on Fredrix canvas panel, 1990, published 1992. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey asleep in bed with a cub on either side. Dream scene overhead includes hikers, campers, lake with sailboats, "Prevent Forest Fires" sign, mountains in the background, and animals in right foreground. Image height 24 inches, width 30 inches.

Among the Homeless – Help Prevent Destructive Forest Wildfires



Original painting is oil on Fredrix canvas panel, 1991, published 1993. Signed "Rudolph Wendelin" in lower right. Shows Smokey in foreground holding cub, facing out of painting. Fire destruction of burned house and trees in background. Many animals surround Smokey. Image height 22 inches, width 28 inches.

Trees Are Wonderful Friends



Original painting is alkyd oil on Fredrix canvas panel, 1992, published for 50th Anniversary of Smokey Bear in 1994. Signed “Rudolph Wendelin” in lower right. Shows Smokey hugging a tree with one cub climbing the trunk, other cub playing in falling leaves. Golden tree on right. Lake with fish jumping, deer nibbling on long grass, other small animals. Image height 24 inches, width 30 inches.

Smokey Says – Prevent Wildfires



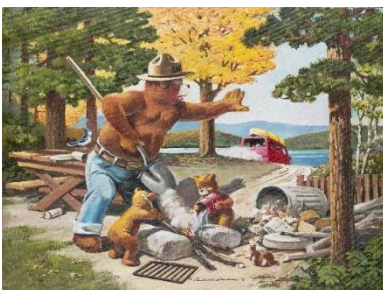
Original painting is oil on Fredrix canvas panel, 1993, published 1995. Signed “Rudolph Wendelin” in lower right. Shows Smokey standing at center holding a cub. Other cub holds Smokey's leg. Various animals in foreground include deer, moose, raccoon, turtle, quail, chipmunk, robin, goldfinch, and squirrel. Image height 22 inches, width 28 inches.

High Five for Fire Prevention



Original painting is gouache on Strathmore watercolor board, 1994, published 1996. Shows Smokey at center giving “high five” hand gesture to Volunteer Fire Department firefighters in their truck. Forest scene with animals on left including cubs, raccoon, deer with fawn, cardinal, and squirrel. Rural town scene in background. Image height 22 inches, width 30 inches.

Hey, Come Back – You Forgot Something



Original painting is oil on Fredrix canvas panel, 1995, unpublished. Signed “©Rudolph Wendelin '95” in lower center. Shows Smokey and cubs dousing a still-burning campfire. Campers are pulling away in their van with yellow canoe on top. Dumped trash can and empty food cans scattered around campsite. Smokey is gesturing to the campers to come back. Image height 18 inches, width 24 inches.